

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 DHA-02 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 OMB-01 /083 W

----- 088523

P R 111757Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1048

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USBERLIN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 13469

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT GW GE SHUM

SUBJECT: MORE FRG REACTION TO THE BORDER SITUATION

REFS: (A) BONN 13325 NOTAL; (B) BONN 13243 NOTAL;

SUMMARY. THE SHOOTINGS ON THE FRG/GDR BORDER AND THEIR
POLITICAL AFTERMATH CONTINUE TO BE THE TOPIC OF WIDE
DISCUSSION IN BONN. ALTHOUGH TAKING GDR STATEMENTS
SERIOUSLY, THE FOREIGN OFFICE DOES NOT FEEL THAT THE GDR
IS INTERESTED IN A PROLONGED CRISIS. NEVERTHELESS,
ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE PROBLEM IS DEVELOPING INTO
A KEY ISSUE IN THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN LEADING UP TO THE
OCTOBER 3 ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

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1. FRG REP (HENZE) HAS BRIEFED THE BONN GROUP ON THE SITUATION ARISING FROM THE RECENT INCIDENTS ON THE FRG/GDR BORDER. AFTER A SURVEY OF THE FACTS AS IN REF (A), HENZE SAID THAT THE FRG HAS NOT TALKED AT LENGTH WITH GDR ABOUT THE CORGHI INCIDENT. IT IS NOT DIRECTLY FRG BUSINESS. IT WAS ONLY MENTIONED BRIEFLY IN A GAUS-NIER CONVERSATION AFTER THE APPEARANCE OF THE NEUES DEUTSCHLAND ARTICLE WHICH IS THE SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

2. HENZE SAID THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE THINKS THAT THE NEUES DEUTSCHLAND ARTICLE IS AN IMPORTANT STATEMENT. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE ALL OF THE MOTIVES BEHIND IT, HOWEVER, IT APPEARS TO BE A PRODUCT OF GDR NERVOUSNESS AND DEFENSIVENESS.

-- FIRST, THE GDR, ACCORDING TO HENZE, IS OBVIOUSLY GETTING NERVOUS ABOUT THE BEHAVIOR OF ITS BORDER GUARDS. THEIR CAREFUL EFFORTS TO BUILD UP A POSITIVE REPUTATION IN THE WORLD ARE BEING UNDERCUT.

-- SECOND, THE GDR IS AFRAID OF THE FRG UN PROPOSAL ON HUMAN RIGHTS. THEY FEAR THAT IT WILL BE LINKED TO THE BORDER INCIDENTS AND THEY WILL END UP IN THE DOCK.

-- THIRD, THE GDR IS DISAPPOINTED AND DEFENSIVE OVER THE GENERAL STATUS OF THE BORDER. THEY ARE NOT ABLE TO ARGUE CONVINCINGLY THAT A NEW GERMAN NATION HAS BEEN CREATED IN THE GDR IF SUCH A BORDER MUST BE MAINTAINED. IN THAT REGARD, HENZE NOTED WITH INTEREST THAT ONLY THE USSR (ASIDE FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA) HAS DEFENDED THE GDR IN THIS SITUATION.

3. HENZE THEN TURNED TO THE THREATS IN THE NEUES DEUTSCHLAND ARTICLE TO CURTAIL TRAVEL. THERE ARE TWO ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM.

-- CONCERNING TRANSIT TRAFFIC TO BERLIN, HENZE DOUBTED THE GDR WOULD DO ANYTHING. IT WOULD AFFECT THE ALLIES AS WELL AS THE TRANSIT AGREEMENT.
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-- CONCERNING TRAVEL IN THE GDR BY FRG CITIZENS, HENZE ALSO DOUBTED THAT THE GDR WOULD ABRIDGE THE TRAVEL AGREEMENT PER SE. HOWEVER, THEY MIGHT CURTAIL SOME OF THEIR OWN UNILATERAL CONCESSIONS IN THIS FIELD THE MOST LIKELY CANDIDATES WOULD BE THE CURRENT POLICIES OF ALLOWING FRG CITIZENS TO USE THEIR PRIVATE AUTOMOBILES IN THE GDR AND THE ISSUANCE OF GDR VISAS VALID FOR THE

WHOLE COUNTRY.

4. BOTH THE AUTOMOBILE AND VISA POLICIES ARE NOTED IN THE KOHL-BAHR LETTERS IN 1972. HOWEVER, THE FRG COULD NOT CLAIM THEIR REVOCATION TO BE TREATY VIOLATIONS.

5. HENZE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT MORE RESTRICTIVE TRAVEL PROCEDURES ARE ALWAYS UNDER DISCUSSION WITHIN THE

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GDR STATE MACHINE. THIS WOULD PERHAPS BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPOSE THEM. NEVERTHELESS, THE FOREIGN OFFICE TENDS TO VIEW THE NEUES DEUTSCHLAND ARTICLE AS A SERIOUS WARNING TO AVOID FURTHER ESCALATION OF THE SITUATION

RATHER THAN AS NOTICE OF THE FORTHCOMING IMPOSITION OF MORE STRINGENT TRAVEL REGULATIONS. THE FILLIP TO DETENTE AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE ARTICLE IS PROBABLY AN INDICATION THAT THE GDR -- AFTER THE APPROPRIATE POSTURING -- WOULD PREFER TO STEP BACK FROM A CRISIS.

6. ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, THE LATEST GERMAN-GERMAN CONTROVERSIES APPEAR TO HAVE AWAKENED BONN FROM THE AUGUST PRE-ELECTION HOLIDAY DOLDRUMS. A MEETING OF THE CDU PRESIDUM AUGUST 9 RESULTED IN A CONDEMNATION OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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SHOOTINGS AND CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO HANDLE SUCH INCIDENTS. CDU SECRETARY-GENERAL BIEDENKOPF ANNOUNCED AFTER THE MEETING THAT HE HAD CANCELLED A PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED MEETING WITH THE HEAD OF THE GDR REPRESENTATION IN BONN, MICHAEL KOHL, AS A RESULT OF THE CORGHI KILLING. ON AUGUST 10, BIEDENKOPF THEN RELEASED A STATEMENT WHICH DECLARED: "NOW EVERYONE KNOWS THE EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE DID NOT MAKE EUROPE ANY MORE SECURE, AND BROUGHT THE GERMANS THE LEAST OF ALL...POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PAST MONTH -- THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE GDR, THE INCREASE IN TENSION OVER BERLIN IN CONNECTION WITH THE ELECTION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE INCIDENTS AT THE ZONAL BORDER, AND ALSO DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LABOR MARKET -- HAVE AGAIN REVEALED THE WEAKNESSES OF THE SPD/FDP GOVERNMENT."

7. ON AUGUST 9, SPD BUNDESTAG FRAKTION LEADER HERBERT WEHNER, FOR HIS PART, SENT A PUBLICIZED LETTER TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE SPD FRAKTION SHARPLY REJECTING RECENT GDR CRITICISMS OF THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT. HE DEFENDED THE FRG POLICIES VIS-A-VIS THE GDR. AT THE SAME TIME, HE CHARGED THAT THE EVENTS BEING SPONSORED BY THE CDU YOUTH GROUP, JUNE UNION, TO COMMEMORATE THE FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ERECTION OF THE BERLIN WALL ON AUGUST 13 REPRESENTED A "PSEUDO- ROMANTIC GESTICULATION." CSU FRAKTION LEADER RICHARD STUECKLEN REPLIED THAT WEHNER'S COMMENTS REVEALS A "CYNICAL CONTEMPT FOR PEOPLE AND THEIR EMOTIONS." STUECKLEN ADDED THAT "WEHNER DESIRED TO COVER UP THE FACT THAT THE DEADLY SHOOTINGS AT THE ZONAL BORDER HAVE ALSO HIT THE OSTPOLITIK OF THE BONN SPD/FDP COALITION."

8. COMMENT: WHILE A FEW BONN PUNDITS BELIEVE THIS POLITICAL EXCHANGE WILL REDOUND TO THE BENEFIT OF THE GOVERNMENT IF THE SITUATION IS PRESENTED TO THE VOTERS AS A CRISIS, THE OTHER VIEW, AT LEAST EQUALLY PREVALENT, IS THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS ARE BOUND TO

PICK UP POINTS OVER THIS ISSUE.

9. WE ALSO HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT BOTH THE GDR AND
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THE FRG ARE NOW ATTEMPTING TO CONTROL THE CONFRONTATION
IN ORDER TO AVOID PRODUCING A CRISIS IN INNER-GERMAN
RELATIONS OVER THIS ISSUE. THE GDR'S DECISION TO
RELEASE BUBBERS APPEARS TO US TO BE A STEP IN THIS
DIRECTION; SO DO GAUS' LOW-KEY STATEMENTS AFTER HIS
MEETING WITH NIER AUGUST 9. THIS SHOULD MEAN THAT THE
PUBLIC ATMOSPHERE WILL ALSO RELAX SOMEWHAT, BUT TWO
SHOOTINGS ON THE BORDER WITHIN A FEW WEEKS WILL NOT BE
FORGOTTEN QUICKLY.
HILLENBRAND

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